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SUBJECT: BOSNIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE PRESIDENTIAL
- ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUMMIT

REF: STATE 112468

1. (SBU) Embassy Sarajevo appreciates the opportunity provided in reftel to nominate candidates from the Bosnian Muslim community to participate in the Presidential Entrepreneurship Summit in the spring. However, we request exemption from the requirement to recruit candidates actively and to hold roundtable promotional events with potential stakeholders.

2. (SBU) We strongly believe that recruitment for such an event solely from the Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina would be divisive and contrary to our larger policy objectives. In a country such as this, with three official constituent groups divided on ethnic/religious lines, our primary goal is to help overcome postwar animosities and restore confidence in a multiethnic future. We believe moreover that potential Muslim candidates for this event -- both established and up-and-coming entrepreneurs -- would rather be identified by their accomplishments and similarities to other entrepreneurs of any faith, than identified specifically as Muslim entrepreneurs, as participation in such an event would inevitably do.

3. (U) Embassy Sarajevo includes active outreach to the Muslim community, and to all religious groups in the country, as part of its public diplomacy. For example, the Ambassador and his predecessors have had a tradition of hosting an Iftaar dinner during Ramadan to include local religious and other leaders and supporting English-language teachers at madrasahs. The President's Cairo speech and the Secretary's initiative to implement a policy of Muslim engagement did lead to a few new initiatives here, consistent with our overall policy. For example, the Embassy organized as a new program a food drive to mark the end of Ramadan, and the Ambassador and DCM delivered the food to a Muslim-organized soup kitchen on September 18. We have also supported the Administration's efforts to promote entrepreneurship broadly, by including links to recent entrepreneurship-related events on our website.

4. (U) We propose to provide information on the summit, as well as other events relating to the Administration's promotion of entrepreneurship, through the Embassy website and Facebook page. We would then direct any self-nominated candidates whom we judge to be qualified to the Washington organizers of the summit.

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